



Key Takeaways

**Session Title: Building the Case for Gender Lens
Investing Across Asia**

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Session Rapporteur
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Suzanne Biegel, Co-Founder of Gender Smart Investing & Raya Papp, Founder, SAGANA (Moderators)

- **Introduction of the Panelists:** Hyunjoo Je (Yellowdog Corporation), Simba Marekara (Brightlight Investment Management), Natasha Shih and Ayaka Matsuno (Sasakawa Peace Foundation)
- Ayaka Matsuno opened the session with an introduction of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation (SPF) – promoting women’s economic empowerment is one of its five strategic goals. The \$100 million endowment under its Asia Women Impact Fund is used towards improving women’s financial access as well as commissioning insightful research.
- The *Gender Lens Investment Landscape Report – East and South East Asia* is the result of one such effort, co-authored and sponsored by Suzanne Biegel, SAGANA and the SPF.
- Suzanne, Raya and Natasha provided a pre-launch overview of the Report’s key findings. To receive a copy after launch, please email potential@sagana.com.



Simba Marekara (Brightlight Investment) & Hyunjoo Je (Yellowdog Corp.)

- Simba Marekara acknowledged that there is limited cognizance of investment products that are gender lens driven, which highlights the importance of studies such as the Landscape Report.
- However, there is growing awareness that gender lens investing is important, and investors are slowly incorporating these principles into their strategies. Asia is seeing significant growth momentum in gender diverse investments, and he believes there will be an increase in the quality of opportunities available.
- Hyunjoo Je, co-founder and principal of Yellowdog Corporation, is uniquely placed as an impact investor and VC in South Korea, where only 7% of investment professionals in total are women!
- Their first fund invested in 7 companies, a majority of whom have received further investment at higher valuation. This has been a validation of their gender lens investing strategy. Their new \$15 million fund has a more comprehensive GLI strategy and specifies in fund documents that 40% of its funds will be deployed towards women-founded companies.



Closing Remarks

- Many investors see their investment strategies as being either impact driven or market driven, despite there being significant overlap in the outcomes of either approach. Suzanne noted that gender-diverse teams outperform all-men and all-women teams. Thus, the focus must not merely be who one invests in, but also on who drives the investment decisions.
- **How does one grow the market for gender lens investing?**
- Natasha highlighted that GLI offers wide opportunities for structured products and blended finance, that stakeholders could come together to explore.
- Simba noted that a significant challenge is scale, and large scale funds and fixed income instruments have a role to play within gender lens investing.
- According to Hyunjoo, it is crucial to show that there is a business case for GLI, and to make funds accessible to women and minorities.



Disclaimer: The intent of the slides above is to merely share some of our learnings/notes from this session. We may not have covered all points touched upon by the panelists. We have also provided our own comment on certain topics discussed by the panelists. Reader discretion is advised.